RM USER

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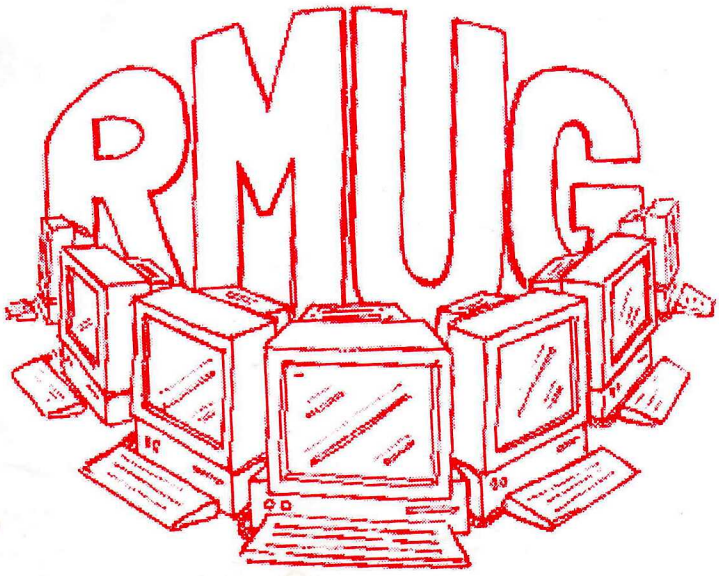

RMUG HELPLINE

The RM User Group exists to help its members use the computers which they have. The magazine is the main way we communicate with our members. If you find that it's not covering the areas you want to know about, then phone someone listed at the back and let them know what you would like to see; the chances are that you won't be the only person who has the same needs.

Many of you (about 20%) are home users of Nimbus computers and we would like to help you. Do please phone any of the people whose numbers are listed at the back of the magazine and we will do our best to help.

You may find that you have a problem which you feel is too trivial for Customer Support or you may have a problem with which they can't help, perhaps because you have a non-standard setup for your equipment or you are using third-party equipment. This is the time when we may be able to help.

Remember that you can telephone the User Group members in the evening or at weekends when RM is shut (and, of course, you are most likely to hit problems).

Also, RM don't claim to have great knowledge of products which they don't produce, such as Excel or PageMaker. They can tell you how to install the packages on their equipment and how to get started but they cannot be expected to give you in depth support on using the packages. We, on the other hand, can. Most of the people whose phone numbers are listed at the back are using a range of software which is probably the same as yours on a daily basis. We may have met exactly the problem you have just encountered.

If you are in difficulty, please ring anybody on the Committee (see page 34) and you may also phone Tim Phillips at home on 01284 706623. It is a great help if you are having a problem doing something using your computer if you can be next to it when you phone because it may then be possible to talk you through a solution over the phone.

If your problem is not urgent, or you think it may be difficult to explain over the phone, then do please write to the Editor with your query. I will either reply to you directly or pass your query on to a better person to solve it or publish your letter in the next magazine as a request for help.

Don't Panic!

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Deadlines for the next issues

RM User 11:1	28 April 1996
RM User 11.2	2 June 1996

The date shown above is the ***latest*** date for copy for the magazine. You will normally receive the magazine about 2-3 weeks after the date shown.

Missing a Magazine?

Back issues of the magazine are available from the editor - please contact me for more details.

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NEWS AND EDITORIAL

Honesty can pay!

There is a campaign in the States to get s/w makers to admit their problems publicly - to own up to their bugs. [Netscape even offer a bounty for reported bugs - and look where it's got them] I think this should apply doubly to hardware makers. A classic example would be the look-up table faults in the Pentium chip that Intel allegedly knew about but didn't acknowledge until a maths prof blew the gaff on the internet. This is one of the finest examples of what the internet is good at. I would like to see RM take a prominent role- as they have with Pathways - and publish a list of their known problems. I have suggested this sort of thing many times before. I think technical support do a pretty good job and I KNOW they work very hard at analysing the calls that come in. I have offered (and hereby offer publicly) to print a list of the top ten problems called in and their solutions. The reward for RM would be fewer techsup calls - a big plus! But it doesn't happen and the only reason I can conjecture is that they don't want to admit that there are any problems. I hope they will grow out of this attitude. Although I think these pages are important, I would be even happier to see such a list on the internet where it would have a wider audience. Perhaps you might lend your voices to this cause next time you speak with your rep. I heard a story that a large car maker set up some web pages expecting to sell lots of cars electronically. Apparently they didn't sell any but were inundated with email messages containing comments like "the left rear door of my saloon rattles at speed - what shall I do?" They were very upset and withdrew their pages. I would consider this a good reason to avoid these cars since they SHOULD be pleased to get this kind of feedback. When I write reports for my students I ask them to write them for me and I want to know what they think. If the car maker - or a computer maker - encouraged this and/or an electronic suggestion box, even to the point of rewarding the best input, they would gain a lot. I also heard that a new model produced by this (car making) company had problems caused by the engine management computer reacting to external electric fields from overhead power lines. Did you know that the latest versions of these systems - from a number of makers - will make it impossible to restart your car if the battery goes flat? Originally said to be intended as a security control, it will have the result that only car makers will be able to service the cars. Perhaps this is the main reason!

Wwwots' where

I used to print my internet bookmarks in RM User but then it occurred to me that this was a waste of space since if you are in a position to use them you would do better to read them on the internet since you would then have the means to visit them. (Please let me know if this doesn't make sense!) Check http://www.rmplc.co.uk/eduweb/sites/ackworth/bookmark.html if you dare.

News

Sonnet, 0181 664 6000, have just announced a service called Callnet which will translate email messages into pager messages. I was impressed.

Does anyone out there have a clear view of the current licence offerings? The last set

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of mailings I got showed RM offering MS Office at £96 while ISCO/Akhter have it at £52 for a licence or £174 for the applications. Has anyone managed to compare these in a practical way?

I want to get an Internet Net Day kit from California. According to the press release it is worth 'about $500' and 'includes 2000ft of cable'. We just got a quote from RM to connect two machines in rooms about 100ft apart - about £1000!

As part of Science Week at the Science Museum RM have sponsored the setting up of a video conferencing link for students to talk to a range of scientists 'live'. I have a good reason to be impressed with science week as you will see later in the magazine!

Tim Clark has announced a deal between RMiFL and Energis to provide ISDN connections at a very good rate. 'Using ISDN technology schools can now access Internet for Learning from every station on a whole school network for as little as £2 per hour.'

RM are also starting to deliver ID-BAR security tags from Retainaguard. These are stuck onto memory chips in such a way that they are virtually impossible to remove. Retainacar stickers [the equivalent system for cars] have resulted in some insurance companies offering 25% discounts.

Some of you may have heard that BT are going to offer a fixed rate for unlimited calls to your Internet Service Provider. The figures I have seen are £700 pa - at which rate I would have to be connected for 10 hours a week throughout the school year. I agree with Tim Clark that I would much prefer to see them offering ISDN at a better rate.

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PRINTER'S PIE

by Peter Harris

"THOSE WERE THE DAYS"

IN the 2nd edition of the Official Guide to the Norton Utilities, Peter Norton and Clint Hicks have an interesting article on type. Unfortunately it contains inaccuracies. For example, when writing about the invention of printing they state, "Rather than write the same letters over and over, the early printers learned to cut them into blocks of wood" and "As the Industrial era dawned and progressed, type came to be cast in metal." Although wood letters were still being made by DeLittles of York up to a very few years ago (in latter days they were made of plastic which is more hard-wearing than beech and retained their sharp edge) for the printing of large letters on posters, the invention of printing in Europe was linked to the use of metal type. Gutenburg was probably trained as a goldsmith in Strasbourg and here developed the idea of casting metal type from moulds. Certainly by 1450 in Mainz he had entered into partnership with Johannes Fust, who financed a printing press.

I instance this as an example of how easily what was common knowledge to one generation becomes specialist to the next.

TYPEFACES AND FONTS

Disraeli once described the good old days as "The palmy days without a date" - but I would like to take you back to one specific year in our industry, 1965. In those days to set the type for a magazine such as RM User we would have used our line-casting machinery (Linotypes) - *no camera-ready copy submitted by the customer!*

Today "Typeface" and "Font" are used more or less interchangeably, but in those days on each Linotype we had four magazines containing matrices (movable moulds released for use by a keyboard stroke). On one we had the then new typeface of Helvetica in four fonts: 6 point roman with bold, 8 point roman with bold, 10 point roman with bold and 12 point roman with bold; on the other we had a similar setup but with Times Roman. As an alternative we could have had in each case roman with italic or bold with bold italic - but only a combination of two could be chosen.

To set these eight sizes of type cost us £3,200 (approximately £20,000 in today's money). No competition from the man-in-the-street in those days!

These fonts of course only enabled us to set the type used for the main text of a magazine. When we needed to set a front cover or a headline we had to use founder's type - individual letters which we assembled and justified in a stick. "Upper Case" was the wooden case (later plastic!) where we kept the Capital Letters and "Lower Case" was where we kept a,b,c etc. A font of, say, 36 point Perpetua Italic cost £25.

When we upgraded from PageMaker 5.0 to PageMaker 6.0, Adobe very kindly included in the £100 package a CD-ROM from which we could unlock 125 classic typefaces in all sizes from 4 point upwards and available in roman, bold, italic etc.

O tempora! O mores!

MIND YOUR P's AND Q's

A printer's imp (or devil) was the youngest apprentice in the printing-office; "Ralph" was the imp of mischief.

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Their first assignment when they joined the firm was to "diss" (distribute, or put back) the type that had been used to print jobs the previous day. This involved learning to read letters upside-down and "mirror-image" (when the ink from the letters was transferred to the paper it then became the correct way for reading).
Because a "b" looks like a "p" and a "d" looks like a "q" it is possible that the expression "Mind your p's and q's" came from the printing industry.

"I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER"

The great German historian Ranke once said that "Every generation is equidistant from eternity" - a truth well illustrated in the film "Thoroughly Modern Millie." And in Emma Thompson's screenplay of "Sense and Sensibility" the ladies of the household were just as keen to learn the latest fashions from London as my wife is when she watches the "Clothes Show" on television. We were very excited the other day when we bought our Pentium 166 computer, but no more so than my father and my uncle when they bought their Model 4 Linotype in 1934.
Before this acquisition all jobs had been "handset" - every letter assembled individually, placed in a setting stick and spacing added. The Linotype did the work of twenty men, twelve setting and eight dissing. If they had an extra-large report to set they could run out of certain letters; so they had to set half the job, print it, and then diss it. Then set the other half. Napoleon used to tell his generals: "The way out is the way through" - and certainly in those days this was true. My father once started work at 6 o'clock on Thursday morning, worked through till 6 o'clock Friday morning, and then continued till 6 o'clock Friday evening. He then had to cycle five miles home! We have occasionally had to work through the night at General Elections when time is at a premium and the candidates want their printing "yesterday." "Printer's Pie," by the way, is when a forme containing type, blocks and spacing material is dropped on the floor, making a jumbled-up mess that takes the apprentice ages to clear up - I know, because I have done it!

THE NEW MILLENNIUM

There has been discussion in the computer magazines as to whether all computer programmes can change from 31st December 1999 to 1st January 2000; some databases apparently can only change the last two figures of the date. Because our Western Civilisation calendar went from 1 B.C. to 1 A.D. (there was no year 0), strictly speaking the New Millennium begins on 1st January 2001 - the year 2000 is the last year of the Millennium that began on 1st January 1001. Don't start early!

PLUS CA CHANGE, PLUS C'EST LA MEME CHOSE

Although our industry has changed more in the last five years than in the previous fifty, the same principles of integrity, service and seeking to fulfil the customer's needs apply as much as ever. As the years pass there is so much to learn, so much that is new, but I can say with Tennyson's "Ulysses" that I am still

"Yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought."

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COMPUTERS FOR ZIMBABWE SCHOOLS - CAN YOU HELP?

We have quite a well-established project in hand for sending networked 480z computers, which are being replaced in British schools by newer models, to schools in Zimbabwe.

They go via the President's Fund, through the good offices of Mrs Chedeya, the High Commissioner's wife. Though not sophisticated, they are very useful for students to learn basic computer skills. We have sent some to Harare, some to Chinhoye, some are going to Marondera, Mazoe, and some to the Bulawayo area. Schools here are delighted to find schools there where their equipment can be useful, and we have had great kindness from Research Machines in providing boxes by the hundred, and from Arrowtip of Kennington and Alsanex of Letchworth, who are giving us packing materials.

The equipment is stored at Zimbabwe House in the Strand, and we do the packing there. Through an appeal in the Britain-Zimbabwe Society Newsletter a very welcome volunteer packer, Eric Davies, has come forward. Once packed, each consignment of computers, with monitors, a printer, cables etc and some software and manuals if possible, wait until there is space on flights returning to Zimbabwe.

Are there more networked (or even single) computers in schools, being replaced by later models? As long as they are in complete working order we can collect and send them to schools which are ecstatic to receive them. A bit of computer literacy in Zimbabwe can make the difference between getting a job or not getting one when a student leaves school. And one member of a family with a job means that the whole family eats. I would be very interested to hear from readers who have such equipment to offer. Helen King 0181 673 3867

You now have your work cut out deciding which good cause to support with your old kit!! I can't help you because I know I would like to support both. I have been to Zimbabwe and would love to go to Rumania because I have heard such good things about it from several different sources. Anyway, there is ceratinly no excuse to leave that old kit in the cupboard gathering dust any more.

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SLEEP

by Marcus Ginn

Imagine a world in which night and day are one. The sun may still rise and set, the stars may sparkle in the moonlit sky, but the fundamental thing that separates one day from the next is gone. Imagine a world where nobody sleeps.

In the year 2043 an amazing discovery was made, that would change the way men live forever. A device was patented which could simulate the state of total rest that is sleep. The process is so efficient that eight hours of slumber can be simulated in only ten minutes.

At first glance this would appear to be the greatest scientific development that the world has ever seen, or ever will. This was the view of the populous also, who invited the concept so readily into their hearts.

The benefits of the system were immediately apparent. For those that could afford it life became much more fulfilling, as they no longer needed to bid a third of it good-bye each evening. It became possible in the beginning to base one's life around relaxation and the realisation of ambitions and goals, whilst spending a smaller proportion of time focused on the essential elements of life, (such as earning a living.) What is more the number of those that can afford the treatment, and use it has risen to over three quarters of the Pacific Basin's population. There are still some who use the treatment in Europe, but their number continues to dwindle. This is of course down to the rapid growth of the Basin's economy over the last century, at Europe's expense.

Once the initial scepticism was over, it became increasingly hard for people to exist without the use of sleep simulation. Professional people can not afford to spend a large amount of time inanimate, while their colleagues and competitors spend the time more constructively. Shops, restaurants, and other amenities were forced to open around the clock to cope with the twenty four hour demand and the people that worked in such establishments then increasingly needed to take advantage of the process. In short, the more that sleep simulation was used, the more it seemed to be needed. Its prevalence would inevitably still be rising today, were the devastating side effects of the murderous invention not so increasingly apparent.

The side effects of which I speak are indeed terrible. A world that has just begun to accept a dream, must now face the harsh reality of a nightmare. Far from allowing one to lead a fuller and more fruitful existence, the simulator serves only to dramatically shorten the life span of those unfortunate enough to have fallen into its trap. The benefits of this supposed Godsend may be enjoyed for a while, but like so many other artificial means of fulfilment, the temporary gain masks the picture in its entirety. The year now being 2064, sleep simulation has had over twenty years to wreak havoc upon its disciples. It is only recently however, that concern has started to be expressed. This is because of the length of time that the resulting side effects take to become visible. Having said this, they materialise in an invisible fashion long before they can be detected by the unsuspecting eye.

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The first cause for concern was the ever increasing reliance that one develops for the process. It becomes necessary to use the simulator for longer and longer periods to achieve the illusion of the same amount of sleep. When first using the system, eight hours of rest can be simulated in as short a time as ten minutes. After fifteen years of use however, this can rise to between an hour and two hours.

This may appear to be a fairly harmless phenomenon, but it is in reality, the tip of a foul and life threatening iceberg. It is a sign of the way sleep simulation can gradually start to control lives, by slowly casting its shadow further and further, until all is enveloped in darkness

Following this discovery came the blow that would cripple the hopes and dreams of the majority of the civilised world. Over the last twelve months people have been submitted to hospital in their millions. The cause of this epidemic is the other edge of a sword that was to give life, but actually tears it away. It would appear that sleep simulation is just that, and nothing more. While it succeeds in giving the mind the illusion that one is sufficiently rested, the flesh and bones fail to be convinced and deteriorate at an alarming rate. The body requires a large amount of time to rebuild and recover from the strain that human activity places upon it. This is supposed to be done during sleep and can not be accomplished in a matter of minutes.

Thousands therefore have died, as will millions more, who dared to place their trust in a dream. I am no exception and will shortly be leaving my bed for a place less holy. I shall not live to see what this world will have to offer those that follow me, but I hope that it is of better stuff than this. It should be, as my demise can be of nothing but help to this world which I have wronged so terribly. Were my sorrow able to undo any part of my actions I would repent, but alas it is not so I can only curse the day that I invented sleep simulation.

I am delighted to print this story. Marcus is a student at Ackworth and was working on his UCLES word processing module - a short story - when we picked up details about the Arthur C Clarke short story competition. This was organised by Martin Bazley at the Science Museum as part of Science Week. We were then invited to attend an event at the museum where the winners would be announced and the winning stories read out by a professional actor. We went to the big city and to our delight Marcus got second place! There were speeches from a BBC science program producer and from the CEO of Ico, a global Communications company. At the end Arthur's brother Fred made a very eloquent address to the winners. It was a really good event and all credit to the Science Museum for organising it and to Ico for subsidising it! I will include a link to the museum's web pages in my bookmarks so you can keep up with any new events.

ADS

FROM: Janet Phillips,
INTERNET: jphi@henleycol.ac.uk
TO: david palmer, 100021,3420
Re: missing ad
The Henley College

David,
Please find copy of e-mail I sent to you some weeks ago. I know you received it as you kindly replied - but I can't find my ad in issue 10.5 of RM User. Maybe I sent it too early & it got forgotten or maybe I'm just not looking hard enough!
We would like to get rid of these asap (we will give them to Romania if we can't sell them - and I'm not very optimistic that they will be saleable now)) so I would be grateful if the ad could get into 10:6 please - thanks.
copy of last e-mail follows:
>I would like to put an advert in Micromart in the next edition of RM User (10:5) if possible please.
>I have pasted in the text below from Winword2 but I can send you an attachment if that is better for you. I would be grateful if you could reply asap to let me know if you have received this (we have been having some problems with our e-mail!) I have written "after 1 March 1996" as I will be away for most of February - but I will be around until then.
>If you would like to comment on the content please do so - thanks.
>Maybe I can take this opportunity of thanking you and all the committee who spend so much of their time on RMUG - it is very much appreciated!
>Thanks very much.

For MICROMART RM User 10.5

>Nimbus Network for sale!
>A complete Nimbus network of 18 stations including all cabling, T-pieces etc, running Windows v.3. (Also a further 7 stations available FREE - just need T-pieces and cable!). Server is a NIMBUS VX/2 (386) with 8Mb RAM and 110 Mb hard disk and has an RM on-site maintenance contract renewable in June 96. It has two Z-net cards (and one ethernet card) and an external tape streamer (using Sytos).
>The operating system is RMNET 3.1 and the applications include MS Word for Windows v.1.1 and Excel v.2.
>The stations are all Nimbus 186 with Z-net cards, all 1Mb RAM, mostly diskless, and 10 have colour monitors, the rest monochrome, and all have mice.
>Price £2000 to a good home, or offers!
>Contact Janet Phillips, Henley College, (01491-579988 ext. 250)
>email jphi@henleycol.ac.uk (after 1 March 1996)

I thought I should print the whole of this message partly as a form of self punishment and partly to air Janet's kind comments about the committee.

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9 PC 186 networks stations for sale with mono monitors and ethernet cards. Offers to Dave Williams in Wales, 01690 750262, evenings

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CYBERSCHOOL MAGAZINE

UPDATE MARCH 1996 http://www.cyberschoolmag.com

Hello!

Each month CyberSchool Magazine will send out one brief update to schools and interested people about what's new in education on the web, new sites to visit and additions to CyberSchool Magazine.

If you do not wish to recieve this update again, just let us know and we'll take you off the list, but we encourage you to print out and post these updates for others in your school who may benefit from education resources on the Internet.

Check out some of March's feature articles! Ever wonder what life was like for students in the middle ages? Or perhaps what teachers did back then to make their students learn? Read the "Time Machine" department's focus on medieval education in this month's issue.

Why are some people brown, white, red and shades in between? Robert Washington takes a look at this intriguing topic in Jelly Beans and Vitamin D, in the "Multi-Mentor" department.

Does ET watch TV? How about George Burns and Jackie Gleason being Earth's first ambassadors to other worlds?! Find out the latest scoop on extra-terrestrial intelligence and SETI in the "Nuclear Newton" department.

Teachers, you can use these topics to generate class discussions and get ideas for lessons or projects which will be sure to interest your students and collegues!

Also, vital tips on essay writing and science fiction can be found in the Bionic Bard department.

EDITOR'S CHOICE EDUCATION HOT SITE of MARCH 1996

The Editor's Choice Award winner for March 1996 is the Exploring Ancient Worlds website designed for students by the philosophy and religion staff at Evansville University.

Well written and with the student in mind, Bill Hemminger draws you into the past with style. Content and design gurus Anthony F. Beavers, Julia Galbus and Hiten Sonpal treat students and teachers to a plethora of useful and exciting mysteries of the ancient world.

Complementing the excellent content, they have added outside links to other Ancient World sites to fill your time travel passport. Visit them today and tell them what you think of their site!

http://www.evansville.edu/~wcweb/wc101

OTHER HOT EDUCATION LINKS

For students of literature and those interested in a good mystery, our Managing Editor discovered, "The Case". This web site has a mystery for you to solve, a la Agatha Christie. Sure to challenge students and teachers alike, this is a great addition to an English class's list of activities.

You can find "The Case" at http://www.thecase.com

For educators and parents, the National PTA has set up a web site with the Microsoft Network. Graphically intriguing, this site will get you information and connections to local PTA chapters around the United States.

You can find "The National PTA Organization" at http://www.pta.org

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CyberSchool Magazine Updates

Some of our readers may have had difficulty at times accessing our site last month. This problem was identified with the help of some students in Australia and teachers in the United States. Thank-you!

We've moved CyberSchool Magazine to a new and faster server closer to the 'backbone' of the Internet to speed connections up.

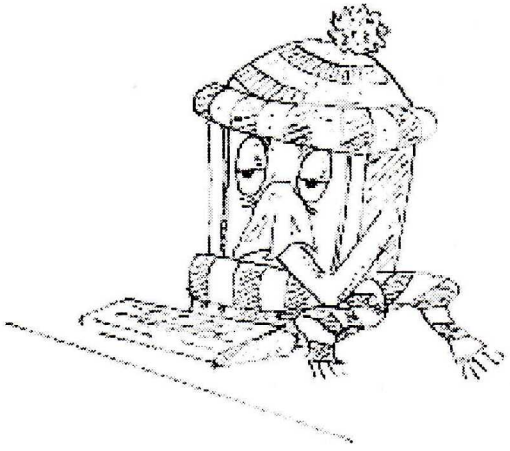
We've also dramatically enhanced the appearance of the magazine for you. It's best to use Netscape to get the best results. The little blue balls next to links are the buttons to activate the link. Also all graphics are clickable now, so click on text and icons to move around faster.

The Surfin' Librarian has begun adding schools to the library! So far we've updated to the letter C. By April, we'll have almost 1300 schools listed for you to visit! Also in April, get ready for almost 1600 FULL TEXT books on-line for you to view, download, print and use in class. Tired of paying $50.- per copy of "A Tale of Two Cities"? Well, due to expired copyrights on almost all books to be referenced by the Surfin' Librarian, you can print out copies for students and teachers to use in class and at home!

For those seeking information from universities after the SATs, we've added several hundred universities to the library as well.

Thanks for your time, I hope that you have a nice day.

J.W. Ross CyberSchool Magazine http://www.cyberschoolmag.com



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FURTHER THOUGHTS OF A SCHOOL COMPUTER MANAGER

Further to my first attempt at an article for RM User and the Editor's comments in italics I should like to expand on a few points and make some more observations.
USER NAMES/PASSWORDS I was interested to see that the Editor uses surnames and adds initials to distinguish as necessary. By using colours for each year group and allocating numbers sequentially i.e. white0001 to white0200 I do not have to change usernames every year - pupils' names are actually irrelevant at this stage. The colours follow through a group's progress through the school, white is initially Year 8, then Year 9 and so on. When a colour is no longer valid because all the pupils have left school I allocate it to the next starting year. My requirement is to clear out all Year 8 and Year 9 work in July and the easiest way I have found is to delete all the relevant users and their directories and then re-create them as bulk users. I then have to clear out some work for Years 10 - 12 and that has to be done individually. I note also Glenn Taylor's comments on how he handles the problem.
I am starting to get tough with those pupils who regularly appear in my office having forgotten their password and not having written it down. A threat to change the password to "moron" and not to allow them to change it works wonders.

PRINTING

Certain versions of the HP560C ink jet have a problem with the composition of the rubber rollers that feed the paper causing the rollers to fail to pick up the paper after considerable use. HP have identified this and sent out a mod kit consisting of a metal plate with what appears to be Brillo pads stuck to it. There is some software with the kit and by following the easy instructions you end up with the printer running for about half an hour with the rubber rollers grinding away on the Brillo pads. It works wonders, so if you have a problem with paper pickup try contacting HP.
Brother HL-6V laser printers are very prone to paper jams due to the large rubber bands which pick up the paper becoming very smooth. A Brother engineer advised me that the life of these bands can be extended by turning them inside out. I have also found out that the angle of the paper feed tray can be critical and I have made some wooden wedges to allow for adjustment. Judicious application of fine sandpaper also works wonders.
Another gripe came to light recently when I had occasion to try and open up some Epson LX-86 printers to inhibit the serial port. The printers are held together with plastic clips which have to be pressed in by just the right amount to separate the top and bottom of the case. I have come across this type of clip in a number of machines but in this case there were 4 pairs of clips along the long edge - I ask you, what can a man do when faced with this single-handed without a factory jig? (You will be horrified at what I did do) Why don't manufacturers think how the machines will be used? We will not be buying any more computer ancillaries with this type of fastening.

PROGRAMS

I commented on a problem I was having with Access 2 but I obviously did not go into enough detail. When the file loads up

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from drive Q or M as Read-only, which is what might be expected, it is not possible to modify the file or to save it in any way, even to try to save it to the home directory. I did try putting the files in drive U: and rewriting the MTSL but this produced a tendency to hang up which I did not know when I wrote the first article.

I finally found a program called MCB Pool for RM Net LM, marketed by a company called Edhitec, 01423 - 871027, which is a little gem and costs £19.95 for a site licence. This allows users to put any files into a pool from which any other users can get the files (without them being read-only) and put them into their own home directory. I obviously monitor what goes into the pool and keep my own copy of what should be there, so very little harm can be done by pupils fiddling about.

Access 2 is so slow on RM 486 SX/50 machines even with 8 MB RAM that we are having to plan lessons round it, to allow for incredible wait times. We also ban its use on our older RM 386/25 and 486/25 "S" series machines with only 4 MB of RAM.

We acted as a test site in September for a Research Machines cable monitoring program which was supposed to identify cabling faults and log them, but it turned out to be an utter disaster and corrupted our RM Boot system. It has now been removed completely but we are left with a server that behaves like a cart horse when more than a few pupils log on, particularly at the start of a period. Neither RM nor I have yet identified the problem, which may not be connected to the cable monitor problem, although I am beginning to have suspicions. I now look at the Net Error log on a daily basis and even when the system seems to be working properly, albeit slowly, the Net Error log builds up to over a hundred entries in a week, all associated with difficulties in logging on. The messages nearly always say <NET3225: Error in updating the logon or logoff information for username> The messages seem to be associated with users who experience a delay in logging on, and who get an on-screen message saying that the server is busy and it is re-trying. Eventually they log-on all right. Research Machines say that this is a function of Lan Manager and is quite normal. You might like to consider the size of this file and type net error /d to clear it out on a regular basis, otherwise it becomes huge and takes up valuable disk space.

I do watch this file - but have never found anyone who admits knowing what the error codes are!

[RM have at last provided me with a loan server while they investigate the slowness of my server. What a difference! Instead of taking nearly 15 minutes to get a class logged on it is down to a few minutes only and printing is quicker. The net error log remains empty. Latest thoughts are that my original processor had become defective but RM will check it thoroughly and report back.]

A careers program called Subjectwise 3 was passed to me to install on the network but gave me some headaches. Everything would work until a menu selection had to be made by using cursor keys, which had no effect. After lots of tests I finally proved that the program would only work in 386 enhanced mode and produced the odd effect in standard mode. Nothing in the instructions about this and when I tackled the providers the person at the other end told me that they knew about this problem! I did indicate gently that I was a bit peeved that they had not sent out a warning. Unfortunately we need our machines to

run in standard mode in order to utilise a number of Nimbus 186 programs, so I am stuck on this one.

We have half of our newest machines with only 4MB of RAM and so teach only on Word 2 on those machines. We also have standalone machines in various departments with only 4MB of RAM and would like to equip them with Word 2 and Excel 4 to allow pupils in those rooms to match what is available on the network. Have you tried to buy Word 2 or Excel 4 from anybody these days? Rocking horse droppings are easier to find.

I saw an ad from Morgan, 0171 255 2115, offering Word2 for £40.

What about Microsoft's new pricing policy!!!!! I bought Access 2 from RM for 16 concurrent users for around £400 and decided that I would like a further 16 concurrent user licence to actually get 30 users on the network. I asked RM for a price, having heard rumours about Microsoft moving the goal posts. Firstly I can no longer buy a further 16 concurrent user licence but can only buy connected licences at £125 per 5 machines on the network for every machine on my network including Nimbus 186 which can not use the program anyway. In addition my existing 16 user concurrent licence becomes null and void. Therefore to try and be honest and get 30 users actually using the program I am in for a bill in excess of £1250. A 20 connected licence for Word 6 now costs £1750. No wonder Bill Gates has bought the county he lives in for his back garden!

I agree whole-heartedly with this point. Microsoft should be giving us the software so we produce MS oriented workers. Again - look at Netscape, free software for schools!

I am now investigating the use of the Internet/World Wide Web via both Frontier and America On Line, using Netscape, on a standalone machine initially. I have set up Netscape both on-line and off-line, so that I can find something suitable and place it in the cache on-line using connect time and BT line time, and then demonstrate it off-line so that there is no need to connect the modem and so saving costs. It works quite well with the proviso that pupils can only look at what I have already looked at and stored in the cache. If they click on a piece of hypertext or icon that I have not previously looked at then they get an error message saying that they can not access the item. If I can find a way to establish exactly what the teachers would like me to download in the first place, then total censorship can be used - no looking at **nasties** because they will simply not be in the cache and will not be accessible off-line. The next step is to investigate how to set up the off-line program on RM Net LM 2 so that a whole class can use the system off-line, instead of crowding round a standalone machine. Any ideas would be welcome.

Secret Agent is a very good utility which has taken over from unmozify (for me) as a way of turning your cache into html pages. I tried WebWhacker, a dreadfully named program which was supposed to collect a bunch of linked pages at once but I couldn't make it work. I too want to offer pages over the network but am still waiting - 14 months and counting - for an upgrade to NetLM2.

Doug. Hamilton, Holmer Green Upper School

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COMPUTER-ASSISTED LEARNING IN ROMANIA

A Project of The Romania Trust

It is now almost two years since I contacted Maureen Wernham to ask whether it would be possible to publicise "Computer Assisted learning in Romania', in the RM User newsletter. Maureen's response was both enthusiastic and encouraging and the project was publicised with a request for donations of surplus RM computer equipment for Romanian schools. Maureen also recommended that I approach her old school Sutton High, who had replaced their Chain 64 network but had kept the server and some stations. This equipment was donated, and we received donations from other schools enabling us to supply two Chain 64 networks and two RM Nimbus 186 networks to schools in Bucharest. Another valuable result of the RMUG publicity was the response of Roger Keeling of Newman College, Birminghan, who phoned to offer some equipment. Roger made the "fatal mistake" of asking questions about Romania, the result of which was that in September 1994 he travelled to Bucharest to run a teachers' training course! Roger, together with Senga Whiteman from Newman and Dave Headey from Oxfordshire's Computer Education Unit ran a very successful course to introduce the equipment and the software to teachers whose schools were about to receive the donated networks. Since then Roger, Senga and Dave have continued to support the project and, to assist with Its development, Roger and Dave returned to Bucharest during 1995 to pay an advisory visit to the schools and they plan to return again in 1996 for further teacher training. During 1994 links were also developed between The Romania Trust and The Soros Foundation for an Open Society, SFOS, in Romania. (Soros Foundations have been set up in each of the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. These foundations are funded by George Soros the American multi-millionaire, of Hungarian origin whose intention is to foster the development of democratic principles in those countries). The Romania Trust, together with SFOS, launched a pilot project through which four schools were selected to receive the equipment, and arrangements were made for a teacher training course In Bucharest. I.T. in Romanian schools Educational standards are extremely high in Romania and LT. is not completely new, although the use of I.T as a teaching tool is a totally new concept

The pilot project proved to be extremely successful and the Romanian teachers have demonstrated their enthusiasm to use IT. in the teaching of a broad range of subjects including mathematics, language work (including English), art packages, word processing, simple spreadsheets, and data handling. Romanian teachers, and their pupils, are extremely keen to develop the project and to extend the use of IT. in "the classroom".

The 'Technology Gap"

Before the Romanian revolution of 1989, as a result of the policies of the Ceausescu regime, there was a particularly low level of modernisation resulting in a "technology gap". Few teachers were fortunate to have access to computer equipment and were forced to teach "Informatics" (mainly the writing of computer programmes) as a purely theoretical subject Some schools considered themselves fortunate to have one or- two Romanian-made Sinclair Spectrums which were used to teach BASIC. One teacher expressed her enthusiasm for the project when she told us she had been "waiting twenty years" for computer equipment to

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use in her "Informatics" class. The same teacher said "I feel that I am in the 20th century now!" In 1994 I visited a new university in Romania where a technician was restoring very old typewriters (possibly antiques!) in order that keyboarding and typing skills could be taught.

Developments during 1995

Following the success of the pilot project in 1994, The Romania Trust has continued to develop the project during 1995 and has gained the support of RM. A team of volunteers within RM have, during the past year, helped to locate equipment and RM has arranged its transportation to Worthing, from where it is despatched for Romania. Further co-operation with SFOS has been established during 1995 and a budget has been provided in Romania for the project This has enabled The Romania Trust to provide Nimbus networks for a further 15 schools in Bucharest, effectively doubling the number of schools in the capital which have computer equipment more up to date than the Spectrum.

Plans for the future

As a result of the enthusiastic help and support which the project has received in the UK. it has been possible to supply 19 schools in Bucharest with RM networks, complete with educational software, together with teacher training and support During 1996 it is intended to provide a minimum of a further 15 networks to be installed in schools in the Romanian cities of Timisoara, Cluj, and Iasi. It may also be possible to extend the project to other countries in Eastern Europe.

An RMUG in Romania?

It is also intended, during 19%, to assist the Romanian teachers using IT to set up a resource centre in Bucharest, and establish their own support network - a Romanian RMUG!

Thanks to RMUG

I would like to take this opportunity to thank RMUC and particularly to thank Maureen and Ian for their support. For the past two years I have been the guest of RMUG at Nottingham when I was invited to give a presentation on the project and last October I was pleased to receive the proceeds of the RMUG raffle, on behalf of The Romania Trust

Can you help?

We would like to hear from any teachers who would like to be involved with the project in any of the following ways:

Donations of computer equipment or peripherals e.g. printers, mice, network cabling, monitor cables, connectors etc

To form a link with a Romanian school e.g. communication by email or exchanging school newsletters (in English - even at primary school level!)

To help the Romanian teachers in setting up a teachers support group, along the lines of RMUG.

To help with teacher training in a summer camp. If you would be willing to travel to Romania (fares paid) during late July or early August

For further information about the project please contact:-

Lesley Andrews
The Romanian Trust
(regd charity no 1050424)
Brook Cottage, Sydenham,
Oxford OX9 4LY
Tel: 01844351153 Fax: 01844 260334

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IF GOD WERE A PROGRAMMER...

Some of you programmers expressed irritation about being described as eccentric. To placate you, we present an excerpt from some email forwarded to us by one of our contributors...

Some important theological questions can best be answered by thinking of God as a computer programmer:

Q: Did God really create the world in seven days? A: He did it in six days and nights while living on cola and candy bars. On the seventh day he went home and found out his girlfriend had left him.

Q: What causes God to intervene in earthly affairs? A: If a critical error occurs, the system pages him automatically and he logs on from home to try to bring it up. Otherwise, things can wait until tomorrow.

Q: How come the Age of Miracles ended? A: That was the development phase of the project. Now we're in the maintenance phase.

Q: Who is Satan? A: Satan is an MIS director who takes credit for more powers than he actually possesses, so nonprogrammers become scared of him. God thinks he's irritating but irrelevant.

Q: Why does God allow evil to happen? A: God thought he eliminated evil in one of the earlier revs.

Q: How can I protect myself from evil? A: Change your password every month and don't make it a name, a common word, or a date like your birthday.

Q: If I pray to God, will he listen? A: You can waste his time telling him what to do, or you can just get off his back and let him program.

Q: Some people claim they hear the voice of God. Is this true? A: They are much more likely to receive email.

Here's a similar file that discusses various operating systems.

The Task: GO TO THE STORE

MS-DOS:

You get in the car and try to remember where you put your keys.

Windows:

You get in the car and drive to the store very slowly, because attached to the back of the car is a freight train.

Macintosh System 7:

You get in the car to go to the store, and the car drives you to church.

UNIX:

You get in the car and type GREP STORE. After reaching speeds of 200 miles per hour en route, you arrive at the barber shop.

Windows NT:

You get in the car and write a letter that says "go to the store." Then you get out of the car and mail the letter to your dashboard.

Taligent/Pink:

You walk to the store with Ricardo Montalban, who tells you how wonderful it will be when he can fly you to the store in his Learjet.

OS/2:

After fueling up with 6000 gallons of gas, you get in the car and drive to the store with a motorcycle escort and a marching band in procession. Halfway there, the car blows up, killing everybody in town.

S/36 SSP [mainframe, obv.]:

You get in the car and drive to the store. Halfway there you run out of gas. While walking the rest of the way, you are run over by kids on mopeds.

AS/400:

An attendant locks you into the car and then drives you to the store, where you get to watch everybody else buy filet mignons.

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STAC CD-QUICKSHARE

**** Stac CD-QuickShare QuickShare is a new software package from Stac that makes your network file server look like a multi-drive CD-ROM server. This has tremendous advantages so far as the use of CD-ROMs is concerned:

* the speed of access to the CD is at hard disk speeds so that CD-ROM software works much faster than normal;
* the cost savings over a CD-ROM server are dramatic.

Cost Savings

The typical cost of an eight drive CD-server solution must be over £3000 - you would need 8 six-speed drives, a 486 or Pentium as the optical server and the Optinet software. To run CD-Quickshare, you use your file server, add a large capacity SCSI hard disk and buy Quickshare. The latter is priced very keenly to education: a starter pack licenced for 5 concurrent users/5 CDs is £175 and 10 user/CD add-ons are £66. (The RRP is considerably higher!) A 4GB SCSI hard disk can be purchased for under £700 and this will store between 10 and 15 CDs depending on what they contain. The total cost is therefore considerably less than the optical server alternative.

Performance

Our school has had a 4 drive Optinet Server for four years but it is not really up to the demands of modern CD-ROMs. The drives are single-speed and the server is a PC386 so that video was definitely out and changing the CDs has always been a bit of a hassle. No doubt with RMs latest range of servers, we could get multimedia performance but with QuickShare, we are now getting video quite happily down the network. Stac claim that for 7 concurrent users, it is over 20 times faster using QuickShare than a CD-ROM tower solution. I don't know whether this has any comparison to an Optinet server but I am sure that since the CD is being read from hard disk, it will be faster than an equivalent CD server.

Installation

You don't need to buy Quickshare to try it out. There is a time limited version available from Stac or from the Internet (www.stac.com) and it has even appeared on the March cover disk of PC Magazine. There is also a 60 day money back guarantee on the product when you do buy it. To test it, you will need sufficient space on your network hard disk for at least 1 CD but you could always find one which contains just a small amount of data if you are hard up for space. The Times94 requires about 250MB for example. Quickshare creates a compressed image file of the CD ROM although most of the CDs I have stored seem to be fairly compressed already. Encarta 96 reduces from about 650MB to 515MB.

* Install the software using the set-up routine that comes with Quickshare. For a multiple server configuration, you should only install it in one place and make a share on that location so that stations over the network can access it. For example, I chose to install it in the same place as the CD-ROM images were going to end up (a 2GB partition on the hard disk) so I created a share called \\serverx1\cdroms pointing to the root directory. Make sure that the share has read\write permission for all users.
* Various files are installed including the

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Quickshare Database, the administrator (cdadmin.exe) and a sub-directory called qcksetup which has the user's selector program (cdslctr.exe). I suggest you view these in File Manager (create a drive connection, say F, to your share).

* You will need to modify the config.sys files for any stations that are to load up the software. You will find these files in o:\dos500\system if you are in the admin desktop. The file for a 486/Pentium is config.s17. Use notepad to insert a line

```
devicehigh=3D\dos\cdshare.exe
  /I:\dos\cdshare.ini
```

as the second last line in the file. You must also copy the cdshare.exe and cdshare.ini files from your installation directory into the o:\dos500\system\dos directory. Remember to type in net stop rmboot and then net start rmboot at the server after any changes to this file area.

* Finally, use Station Manager to modify the post-station startup programs for any stations using Quickshare. Insert the following line:

```
\dos\mscdex /d:cdshare$$ /v
  /l:h
```

(your Quickshare drive will have drive letter H) If you have Optinet on the system, then delete the line with rmcdstd and insert the following lines:

```
hiload netusr.com /n:1
  \dos\mscdex /d:$$optinet /
  d:cdshare$$ /v /l:h
```

(your Quickshare drive will have letter I - must not be hiloaded)

```
hiload wnetusr.com
```

* Reboot any stations that have been modified and watch the booting messages. You should see a line creating CDSHARE$ and, another binding MSCDEX to CDSHARE$. If all goes well, log on as admin and start File Manager. Change to drive F and run cdadmin.exe by double-clicking on it. You will be asked where the database is - just enter the share name \\serverx1\cdroms.

* Now you can create a CD-ROM image to run on the network. Choose NewCD and a form will come up - I just enter the name of the CD and the number of licences (999 for an unlimited number). You can also change the name of the image file if you want (ending in .cdi).

* The image will be created and when complete, the CD will appear in the list box showing that it is ready to be used. To mount it, you simply drag it into the player and if you now use file manager to look into the Quickshare drive (eg i:), then you should find the CD is there. Carry out the CD's own installation as normal and you will then be able to use it as though it were mounted on a local CD drive. Using Quickshare You can give users an icon for cdslctr.exe which will allow them to mount a CD. They could then run the exe file for the CD in the normal way. However, it is obviously better to have an MTSL that will mount the CD automatically, run the CD and then dismount the CD after use. Here is an MTSL that will do the job for WinTimes.exe. The name of the CD-ROM is Times 94.

```
if %cdrunning=3Dtrue echo A
  CD is already loaded -
  Close it down first
else do netdisconnect f:
do netconnect f:
  \\serverx1\cdroms
if not exists
  %windir%\cdslctr.exe copy
  f:\cdshare\qcksetup\cdslctr.exe
  %windir%\ (these must be
  in your T drive)
if not exists
  %windir%\cdshare.ini copy
  f:\cdshare\qcksetup\cdshare.ini
```

```
 %windir%
Setini CDSHARE.INI [User]
 Inserted=3D01/02/96
 16:00:00 (any date can go=
 here - 2 spaces after
 date)
Setini CDSHARE.INI [User]
 CDROM=3DTimes 94 (name
 that you gave to the CD)
set cdrunning=3Dtrue
spawn %windir%\cdslctr.exe
exec
 i:\wintimes\wintimes.exe
spawn f:qcksetup\cdend.exe
set cdrunning=3D endif
```

The file cdend.exe is simply an executable that dismounts the CD and then closes the selector down (obtainable from me if you can't write this yourself)

Problems

I have only found 4 problems:

* Quickshare will not run on a 286.
* If users do not log off their CD, the number of users you are licensed for will soon be used up. There is a way of removing users from the database but it is a bit tedious to do. All my MTSLs log users off correctly so this shouldn't happen.
* You obviously need a large capacity hard disk. I had a 2 GB spare partition and I intend to get another 4GB drive next budget. This is cheap if you add the new drive yourself but at RM's ludicrous prices, it is not very economic.
* This is another stress on your file server and especially if multimedia CD access is used, the performance of the network will degrade much more than if a dedicated optical server is used. For our site, where CDs are only occasionally accessed, I can't envisage much of a problem. I can foresee that this will be an excellent way to use old file servers when upgrading our network.

Help!!!

I can provide disks containing the following: Quickshare (shareware version), a CD-ROM launcher (a single icon launches any CD available on the system, Optinet or Quickshare), a selection of MTSLs for various CDROMs, the additional files needed to dismount the CD-ROM automatically, and details of how to add a 4GB SCSI hard disk (but no guarantees given). The cost of this is £16 inclusive of P&P.

Purchasing

Quickshare Vastly reduced education prices are available from Chest, De Montford University, Scraptoft, Leicester, LE7 9SU (0116 257 7779). *****

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CDROM NEWS

by David Palmer

Corel have started something called Corel CD Home. This is a rapidly growing, rather eclectic list of CD titles. So far I have looked at three of them - here is a brief description of each. Call Corel on 0800 581028 for current prices.

Internet Mania

This is a collection of eight 'utilities' to do with the internet. They are (1) a web page updater - monitors a list of pages at an interval which you set and - you guessed it - keeps them up to date. (2) Newscan, this scans Usenet groups and picks out articles which meet your criteria. (3) Quotescan, this scans stock prices on the American exchanges and keeps track of those stocks you want to watch (RM etc). (4) Lycos Web Search, this is a snapshot of the Lycos database. This sounds a bit restrictive since the internet changes all the time but it does have a facility for checking on the latest data once you have done some preliminary searching offline - thus saving money if you don't (yet) have free access to the internet. (5) Web directory, this is a database of websites that are sorted using criteria that you can choose for yourself. Again, Corel have done some spadework for you but when you go online, you can extend it as you desire. (6) Corel FTP, this collects data from FTP servers that you specify - and will go fetch files too. (7) Home Page Author lets you create your own www pages and (8) Personal Web Server lets you display them. All in all an honourable attempt. I was surprised they hadn't included any browser software (like the Beta version of Netscape 2) and I did feel that the CD I got off the cover of Internet magazine offered stiff competition.

Classic Books

This is quite astonishing. There are over 3,500 texts in this collection. They come with a browser which has respectable search tools, a dictionary and a collection of pictures and movies that relate to some of the texts. The texts include short stories, novels, plays, poems, historical, political, religious and scientific tracts. If I was an English teacher this would be a 'must-have' disc but there is a pretty big collection of stuff for the history department and the social studies lot too.

Adventures with Edison

This uses a rather (too) cute, American cartoon character to introduce three different activity areas called 'Wild Science Arcade', Mystery at The Museums' and 'Rock and Bach Studio'. The first of these is quite interesting. It reminds me of Spindizzy on the Spectrum - which still remains one of the best computer simulations I have ever seen. You control a rolling ball and have to move it through 100 rooms where you will meet various challenges. You will need to control the elasticity of the ball, the friction and the gravity in order to succeed. The second activity is very complex. My only real criticism here is that it takes a long time to get to the actual puzzles. None of these are particularly original but are quite good fun and you will have to remember a lot of incidental facts in order to solve the overall challenge. The last area is absolutely dire. I have little musical ability but I love experimenting. This sounds like just want I want but in fact is so clumsy and restrictive that I would happily chew off the relevant bit of the disc - the rest is worth having!

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Europress - and I make no secret of the fact that I am a fan of their output - continue to add to their catalogue. They now have four titles in their 'Living Books' range - Peter Pan, Alice in Wonderland, Treasure Island and Journey to the Centre of the Earth. Each follows the same formula. The disc contains an illustrated (true to the style of the original) story with loads of clickable animations, a number of games and the facilty to play the disc in an audio player just to hear the tale. It has all been done with their Klik and Play system - which they also sell. Then there is their Fun School series. This now includes ten titles and the ones I have seen are all popular with my junior testers. Fun School Young Scientist for example uses a well produced animated character to lead the user to a variety of areas, each of which contains a message (save the planet etc) and a set of activities such as colouring, finding hidden objects and a set of 'science'-leave-the-computer-and-do-an-experiment cards. Then they have a 'Lifestyle' range which includes Gardeners' World 3D design, Gone Fishing, Driving Instructor and RAC Rally. I was particularly interested in the last title since I was involved in the Rally scene in Africa. All their discs are very reasonably priced - typically about £20. Call 0800 454330 for more information.

Lastly Virgin are getting into this area too. The only title I have seen so far is 'Paperopolis' which has a slow (and very annoying) animated guide, a toad which looks as if it was run over and then revived with an injection of very strong drugs. The good thing is that the disc contains 600 paper models. The bad news is that it takes so long to get to them and when you do you may have trouble printing. I found it much easier to use Clarisworks to open the resource files and print them! I believe they are also doing a series called 'One World' but the promised review discs didn't show up.

RM User Group

Training Weekend 1996

Although our last weekend is not long past, we're starting to plan the next one so make a note in your diary of the date and start putting requests in for money from your Inset budget.

Date: 18-20 October 1996

Venue: Hotel de Vere, Swindon

Price: £240 for members, £260 for non-members (includes membership)
£75 for 1 day, £95 for non-members, call for any other combination

Swindon was chosen as an easy site to get to. Although the last two events were probably as close as you can get to the centre of the country, we are moving this one southwards since we have more members in that direction. As we have said before, we are willing to help organise regional events if any member comes up with a venue. Your partner can stay in your room (all rooms have double beds) for a nominal charge and please note that the hotel will charge for any extra meals taken.

Apart from yourself, please consider promoting this as an INSET provision for other staff members.

OF MICE AND ELEPHANTS

by Nick Jarvis

The account below describes a lesson that took place in Long Stratton High School last year, as part of a Maths project. It has been written by Nick Jarvis who is Head of Mathematics at the school.

Year 7 looks eager. Each one sitting at a keyboard, dwarfed by the monitor in front of them. This was something new.

Peter, IT Advisory Teacher, zoomed between the keyboards loading the spreadsheet.

"Good morning, everyone". "Good morning, Mr. . er . . ."

He said it in such a pleasant way . . . he sounded as if he really liked children. "I want you to imagine you are the buyer for a zoo. You have to buy exactly 50 animals and have to spend exactly £500. How many of each type of animal would you buy?"

This was the first time my class had seen a spreadsheet and was exactly the type of problem for which I had been searching as an introduction to the topic. So few of the problems I had seen were of the 'What if ?' type. A few words about how to change the variables and they were off. Michelle looked puzzled. Simon was lost. Matthew was going great guns. Katie did her usual "Oh, Sir!"

Twenty minutes or so later, Peter started to get some responses. "Sir", Jo said, "you can have 24 lions, 1 monkeys, 8 mice and 17 elephants." Kate beamed, her mouth as wide as the room, "I've got 33 lions, 4 monkeys, 2 mice and 11 elephants." Kevin chipped in. (Well not quite, shouted out would have been better.) Iain and Matthew gave their answers.

Hang on, I thought, there is a pattern to these answers. Taking the whiteboard pen from Peter, I took over - I just could not let those patterns go to waste!

(Now class - stop enjoying yourselves, I'm taking over.)

"Let's put these solutions into order. Let's put them into a table." (Good old investigation technique - if you can record it, put it into a table.)

"Which one shall we start with? Which one has the smallest number of Lions?" "Jo's."

"Right, Jo, how many lions, monkeys, mice and Nelliphants?" (Remember they are only Year 7.) "24, 1, 8 and 17, Sir." "Which one next?" "Mine," says Michelle. Simon calls out, "Iain's is next, Sir. He's got 27, 2, 6 and 15."

Kevin chips in, "Mine goes before Iain's!" "What is your result, Kevin?"

Kevin lists his results. "That doesn't fit in, Kevin. You must have got that one wrong." ("Again", I think to myself.) Simon looks at Karen's screen and quickly types in some numbers. "Sir," he calls out, "I've got 30, 3, 4 and 13."

Peter, not wanting to be left out, eyes beaming with delight at the activity, tries to get back to the spread-sheeting, but his lesson has been high-jacked. This pattern of numbers is far more interesting.

The white-board becomes covered in an impromptu table of results. "What's the pattern? What's happening to these numbers?"

"The lions are going up in three's and the elephants down in two's. But the mice are going up by one each time, whereas the monkeys are going down by two."

"Have we got all the results?" "Why do we get this pattern?"

Blank faces. Silence.

The bell!

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The next day. Year 8
"Good morning, class. I've got a good idea. We're going up to the computer room..."
Surprisingly, Year 8 were far more inhibited in finding solutions and had to be prompted. Perhaps the reason is that, having more computer experience although none of spreadsheets, they were asked to create the spreadsheet first. But after a few prompts, answers began to come, including the solution that Kevin found yesterday.
Was there something I had missed?
What were Kevin's results?
This problem was even more interesting than I first thought.

Animal	Price	How Many	Cost
Lions	£ 10.00	30	£ 300.00
Monkeys	£ 1.00	3	£ 3.00
Mice	£ 0.50	4	£ 2.00
Elephants	£ 15.00	13	£ 195.00
TOTALS		**50**	**£ 500.00**

You want to buy **50** animals and you've got **£500** to spend.

How many of each animal will you buy?

(You must have AT LEAST ONE of each animal)

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INSUFFICIENT MEMORY

by David Palmer

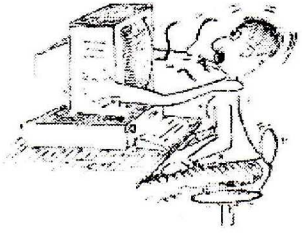
As you can see, I have changed the name of this column to something I find very appropriate these days!

I thought Janet Street-Porter was very sad on Channel 4 as she rubbished the whole concept of the Internet. As she made (what I thought were) arrogant and condescending remarks about people on the Net being prime candidates for dirty macs I had to wonder about some of the stories that have been printed concerning **her** social life. Fortunately I found some quicktime movies with Kai Hammerlich (of Kai's Power Tools) that had a balancing effect. In one clip he drew a parallel between the development of speech and computers. He said that right now with computers we are at about the same stage as when we spoke with 4 consonants and 2 vowels - running around saying 'Uuunngghh, huh?' and so on. Imagine what it will be like when we get the other 20 letters! His second analogy - which I found very apt for the review element - was to imagine that you are reviewing the first paper and pencil. You do a few scribbles and then say 'I don't think much of that!'. But just imagine what happens when the same tools fall into the hands of a Shakespeare or a Picasso.

I have also had my faith in the man/machine interface boosted by a number of very positive outreachings caused by people coming across our Web pages. Through these contacts we have now exchanged material with a new Quaker school in Atlanta, Georgia, had an invitation to attend Space Camp in the USA as the guests of the organisers, started a Work Experience Exchange Scheme with a school in Sweden, entered (and won a prize) in a story competition at the Science Museum and made contact with an Old Scholar from our school who put us up when we went to get the prize!

I have just got some accelerated 486's and I am very pleased with them. However, when I went to put a CDROM drive into one of them, I discovered that it had a two plug IDE cable! I couldn't believe it - it is actually the first time I have seen such cable without an intermediate plug. I had to go and swap it with one out of one of my 'old' 486's. While doing all this I pondered on the idiocy of saving money this way - and also of the designers who make IDE plugs without a bump to fit in the socket the right way round. I have never seen a plug with a bump - and I have never seen an IDE socket without a notch to accomodate one! If you run into this problem, it is worth remembering that the red line on the cable should be nearest to where the power cable attaches to the device.

I also get frustrated with the anonymous idiots who decided to stop putting mileages (or even km) on roadsigns. And who decided that it was a good idea to abandon the sane practice of wiring spot lights, foglights etc through the dip switch!



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COMING TO THE TRAINING WEEKEND
OCTOBER 18th to 20th?

You may be asking these questions.

WHY THAT WEEKEND?
Most schools are on half term holiday then.

WHY SHOULD THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE?
Two reasons. Firstly the members would not be able to bring their computers out of school and get them back again fully operational for Monday morning school. Secondly all of you are more relaxed and able to enjoy the weekend without worrying about school the next day.

WHY AT SWINDON?
1. It has a good rail service (1 hour to London).
Links to Bristol, Wales, Midlands and the North.
2. Roads:- Within minutes (1 mile) of the M4 (junction 16) motorway which has good access from the M5, M40 and M1 as well as a good selection of A roads.
3. London and Bristol airports are within easy reach.

WHY THE DE VERE HOTEL?
1. It is a modern and yet luxurious style hotel with all the necessary facilities for the courses, nicely appointed bedrooms (smoking and non smoking) and a good restaurant and bar.
2. Plenty of car parking space.
3. It has a Leisure Club with free membership for all guests. It consists of a swimming pool, spa pool, steam room, sauna, solaria, gymnasium, weight lifting, snooker room and beauty therapy room (massage etc.).
4. The hotel is situated on the edge of a Leisure Park which, within 150 yards, has
a) 32 lane Ten Pin Superbowl
b) a Multi Screen Cinema
c) Pinkertons American Diner
d) Cairos Night Club and opposite there is the Link Centre with an Ice Rink, Squash Courts and Health Suite. 1+ miles away there is the Delta Indoor Tennis Centre.

Doesn't all this sound attractive, not just for you, but your Wife/Partner/Family? There is plenty for them as you can see but there is more!

Swindon itself offers :- Shopping, The Great Western Railway Museum and Railway Village Museum, Art Gallery and Wyvern Theatre, Go Karting.

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WHAT TO SEE AND DO AROUND SWINDON?

Avebury (10 miles south) - for its famous stone circle - free access.
Stonehenge (35 miles south) - world famous prehistoric monument - admission charge but free for National Trust and English Heritage members.
Longleat Safari Park, House and Gardens - charges are various.
The famous White Horses of Wiltshire - figures cut into the chalk hills.
Lydiard House and Park (4 miles) - a Wiltshire stately home - one of the best small ones in England and, by it, one of the finest small churches.
Bath - visit this famous Georgian city with its Roman baths.

Then there are the towns and cities - Bristol, Oxford, Salisbury, Marlborough, Malmesbury and its Abbey, Bradford on Avon, Laycock National Trust Village, and many more. There are lots of small villages within a few miles of Swindon as well as the Cotswold countryside for walking and cycling.

WHAT MORE COULD YOU AND YOUR FAMILY WANT?

Just the training! Well you know that this is always excellent and full details will be published as soon as possible.

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If you have any questions at all, including costs for partners and families, please phone me, Maureen Wernham, on 0181 398 1948 or write to RMUG, FREEPOST, Esher Surrey KT10 0BR.

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Your Magazine

I make no apologies for leaving this page as it is since I agree with every word!

I really do welcome items for the magazine from anyone. You don't have to be a great writer to send something in; send a letter or a short tip for the Hints and Tips pages, everything is welcome. If you want to phone and talk something over then please do; even if you aren't sure how to write something down then I can always include your ideas in Hints and Tips or as a plea for help; some of you will recognise your phone calls on the Hints and Tips pages!

I would be particularly pleased to hear from the people who are using RM computers at home; there are quite a lot of you out there. Some of you will be experienced at working with computers and I would be interested to know why you chose RM for home use. Others will have responded to RM's advertising, perhaps because your children use the same computers at school. How are you getting on with your new machine? Did you have any problems getting started? It doesn't matter if you still don't know the answer to the problem- this is how you'll find out - and it doesn't matter if you think that your problem was trivial; remember that there are many other people who are going to be in exactly the same position as you and will welcome the help that you can give.

If you are writing for me then the ideal is to send me a disc produced using Word or Word for Windows but I can cope with any word processor that runs on a PC or Nimbus (I think). If what you are sending is short then a letter on good old fashioned paper is fine. I can also accept articles left on the bulletin board - the easiest way to to do this is to prepare your article in a word processor and save it normally. You then send a short e-mail to me and attach your file to it when you are on-line. It's actually easier to do than to describe because the whole thing is menu driven.

Finally, we pay for published articles at the rate of £5 per printed page (although all payments are at the Editor's discretion).

Advertising in the Magazine

Full and half page advertisements can be placed in the magazine and details can be obtained from the Advertising Manager. We also take classified ads and members may place free ads for surplus equipment in MicroMart.

Rates

Back Cover **£60** Inside Cover **£50** Full Page **£30** Half Page **£20**

These rates assume black-on-white, camera ready copy. Please avoid dot-matrix output. Typesetting is charged at cost and is additional to the above rates. Please make cheques payable to *RM User Group*

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Membership Form

Please use capitals

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms .....

Job title (if appropriate) .....

Address .....

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Postcode .....

I enclose a cheque payable to RMUG/order for £20. If you are not enclosing a cheque then please send an official order, indicating clearly to whom the invoice should be sent.
In order to serve our members better we like to know something about them and what they do with their computers. The information you give is confidential and we are registered as Data Users under the Data Protection Act.
Are you involved in education?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, with what age range do you work:

below 11 ☐ 11-18 ☐ 18+ ☐

Do you use a computer at home?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If you object to your details being passed on to other members of the user group, please check this box ☐

Please send your form and payment to:
RMUG, FREEPOST, Esher, Surrey, KT10 0BR
You may photocopy this form if you do not wish to cut your magazine.

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